



United States Mint, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger And First Lady Maria Shriver Launch California Quarter

January 31, 2005

Celebrating "John Muir, Yosemite Valley and California Condor"

SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA — United States Mint Director Henrietta Holsman Fore joined Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and First Lady Maria Shriver at the California State History Museum to launch the California commemorative quarter-dollar today. The reverse design on the new quarter depicts naturalist and conservationist John Muir admiring Yosemite Valley's Half Dome. Soaring amid the scene is a California condor. The coin bears the inscriptions "California," "John Muir," "Yosemite Valley" and "1850."

"The California quarter honors California's varied and profound natural beauty and John Muir, whose appreciation for the State's dramatic landscape became his lifelong work and passion," said Director Fore. "Today and for many years to come, this quarter will remind us of California's promise and spirit."

Following the launch ceremony, coin collectors of all ages exchanged their coins and bills for rolls of California quarters. Peter the Mint Eagle, the United States Mint's mascot, was on hand to celebrate with the crowd.

The first quarter released in 2005, honoring California, is the 31st in the United States Mint's 50 State Quarters Program. California was admitted into the Union on September 9, 1850, becoming our Nation's 31st State.

In 1849, the year before California gained statehood, the family of 11-year-old John Muir emigrated from Scotland to the United States, settling in Wisconsin. In 1868, at the age of 30, Muir sailed up the West Coast and landed in San Francisco. He made his home in the Yosemite Valley, describing the Sierra Nevada Mountains as "the Range of Light... the most divinely beautiful of all the mountain chains I have seen." He devoted the rest of his life to the conservation of natural beauty, publishing more than 300 articles and 10 books that expanded his naturalist philosophy.

In 1890, Congress established Yosemite National Park, and, in 1892, John Muir helped form the Sierra Club to protect it, serving as that organization's President until his death in 1914.

The California condor, with a wingspan as long as nine feet, is also featured on the coin in a tribute to the successful repopulation of the bird that was once nearly extinct.

Lesson plans about the California coin may be downloaded free from the United States Mint website at <http://www.usmint.gov/kids>. Teachers, parents and students can also explore the many other teaching aids, and the games, puzzles, and stories for kids that show how coins are "history in your pocket."

The California quarter is available in two-roll sets (40 coins per roll), including one roll each from the United States Mint at Philadelphia and Denver, and in bags of 100 and 1,000 coins, at the United States Mint website at www.usmint.gov. The two-roll sets are \$32.00, bags of 100 coins are \$35.50, and bags of 1,000 coins are \$300.00.

For a high resolution photograph of the California Quarter, please visit <http://www.usmint.gov/pressroom/index.cfm?action=Photo#SQ2005>

VIDEO AVAILABLE — Satellite Feed of B-Roll California State Quarter Launch; State Archives Reference Room, Sacramento, CA.

Satellite feed date: January 31, 2005; Feed time: 3:30 p.m.–4:00 p.m. ET, IA 6, Transp. 15; DL 4000V

Satellite feed date: February 1, 2005; Feed Time; 1:00–1:15 p.m. ET, IA 6m Transp. 15; DL 4120

This b-roll produced by the United States Mint will contain: 1. Close-up of new California quarter; 2. Scenes from launch event at the California State History Museum; 3. Sound bites of officials from the event, launching the new California quarter.

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